

P r e f a c e

In an effort to gauge awareness of ongoing conservation efforts in California, the Resources Agency recently conducted a statewide survey of city and county planning staff, natural resource managers and conservation leaders. We found that while there was support for land and water conservation across the state, knowledge of existing conservation programs and funding sources was relatively limited. Those surveyed expressed a desire for additional information, increased funding, and technical assistance to protect wildlife habitat, wetlands and watersheds in their communities.

Given the survey results, we decided to develop a guide to land and water conservation programs and funding sources in California to help educate and support our local partners. Such a guide would provide information on the numerous conservation initiatives in the state, highlight regional innovative partnerships and describe state, federal and private funding opportunities. By developing the guide on a bioregional basis, we wanted to encourage additional information sharing and partnering across local jurisdictional lines.

This guide is primarily a compilation of existing data and information sources; therefore inaccuracies may occur. We have attempted to verify and update information where possible. It is our hope that this guide will serve as a prototype for future annual publications on land and water conservation in California.

In this guide the reader will find an *Introduction to Bioregional Planning and Conservation in California*, where an overview of trends along bioregional lines is given. Maps and graphs show current and projected population growth, land ownership patterns, vegetation types, and total acreage for each bioregion.

Land and Water Conservation in California's Bioregions is divided into each of the ten bioregions with information about population, tourism and industry, geography, and natural resource issues.

Descriptions of conservation initiatives provide examples of innovative resource protection efforts currently underway. Maps and charts are provided to give the reader additional knowledge of the bioregion's vegetation, threatened and endangered species, natural resource conservation projects, and habitat conservation planning and natural community conservation planning initiatives. A list of organizations working on land and water conservation in each bioregion is included to facilitate increased collaboration.

The conservation initiatives highlighted in the California Bioregions section are meant to showcase the diversity of regional efforts and in no way reflect the full scale of successful conservation projects being undertaken in communities across the state. In fact, had it not been for space and time limitations, the range of projects would be even broader. We thank our partners who took the time to submit conservation initiative overviews and we applaud their efforts to protect California's natural systems.

Lists of federal, state, regional, and private funding opportunities are outlined in *Funding Sources for Land and Water Conservation*. Where available, we included contact information, a description of the program, the the purpose or focus of the funding, and statistics about the average size of grants and/or amount of money available in the program.

Materials contained in the appendices give the reader additional resource information. A list of conservation efforts in other states is provided as well as results of the 1998 open space acquisition ballot measures from around the country. The appendices also includes a list of organizations and publications focused on land and water conservation in California and across the country. Many of these organizations now have web pages and we encourage you to refer to these pages to learn more about the organizations, their mission, programs, and accomplishments.

Whether your interest is in land protection, habitat restoration, or environmentally-friendly economic development, this guide should provide you with a place to get started.

EDITORS

Acknowledgments

Preserving California's Natural Heritage was prepared by the following Resources Agency of California staff: Debbie Drake, Assistant Secretary for Conservation Programs; Jim Youngson, Assistant Secretary for Communications and Policy Development; and Melissa Miller-Henson, Policy Analyst. A very special thanks to our consultant, Wendy Millet, whose efforts made this document possible.

Many other individuals and organizations assisted with compiling the information in this guide. We especially want to acknowledge the organizations and individuals working on land and water conservation initiatives across California's landscapes. Their efforts are helping to protect California's natural systems, sustain safe and reliable water supplies, support a thriving economy, provide recreational opportunities, and maintain healthy communities for this and future generations.

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Foreword

California is a land of great variety and contrasts, defying simple description. The sheer size of the state is alone worth noting, coupled with an extraordinarily diverse series of landscapes usually not found in such close proximity to one another. Due to this regional and natural diversity, it is understandable why California's efforts to conserve the land have historically been fragmented, or stand-alone, accomplishments. It is often difficult for natural resource managers, planners, policy makers and the general public to gain an overview of conservation efforts and their relationship to one another. As we prepare for more population growth in the next century, better integrated conservation strategies will be needed to protect the state's biodiversity. To this end, ***Preserving California's Natural Heritage: a bioregional guide to land and water conservation*** is the first compendium of its kind.

Until recently, the policies that shape natural resources management in California were typically formulated in Sacramento or Washington, D.C. Now, however, government agencies are taking a new, collaborative approach that has great potential for success. Instead of imposing "solutions" from afar, government is working directly with interested stakeholders to foster and support locally developed initiatives. The California Biodiversity Council, for example, is stressing the importance of interaction among agencies at all levels and exploring how best to pursue the goal of sustainable natural resource management.

Successful conservation initiatives must forge partnerships of all kinds, bridge environmental and economic priorities, and promote ecosystem management. Currently, these themes are best reflected in two major programs in California, the Natural Community Conservation Planning

(NCCP) program and the CalFed Bay-Delta Program. The NCCP program is considered California's most innovative model of ecosystem planning, merging traditional urban planning policies with biological considerations. The Bay-Delta program includes the most ambitious and extensive ecosystem restoration and management program in the country, and the state's future is heavily dependent upon its success. Together, these two programs represent new models of integrated resource management.

One final element essential to the success of any conservation effort is, of course, adequate funding. Often, local initiatives possess vision, leadership and drive, but are lacking without necessary financial resources. This publication assists local initiatives by identifying a variety of public and private funding sources available for these purposes. Together with the bioregional conservation efforts highlighted here, this funding information should prove useful in sparking the incentive and creativity which will enable us to meet the conservation challenge.

It should come as no surprise that it is difficult to catalog and identify the literally thousands of locally-based conservation efforts underway across the state. We can only begin to survey these countless individual efforts, both large and small. In the future, it will be essential that conservation efforts in California be undertaken in an integrated manner, emphasizing cooperative partnerships, leveraged funding, and the integrity of entire ecosystems. The information found within ***Preserving California's Natural Heritage*** should prove useful to all who care about the future of conservation in the Golden State.

DOUGLAS P. WHEELER
Secretary for Resources
State of California